



SWACO

NEWS & UPDATES



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Buckets that had been dumped in
the ravine.



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Ohio EPA, Local Authorities Get Convictions on Clintonville Dumpers

COLUMBUS - The Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) jointly announce that a case involving an illegal dumping which blighted the Clintonville area Walhalla Ravine four years ago has been solved. Jeffery A. Gardner Jr. and Andrew Eckstein have pled guilty in Franklin County Municipal Court to one count each of water pollution for dumping paint and other remodeling materials in Walhalla Creek.

The two men were sentenced by Environmental Judge Harland Hale and ordered to pay \$8,060.65 in restitution to Ohio EPA for removing the dumped items and cleaning up the paint-contaminated creek, \$787.00 in court fines and costs, and to serve 100 hours each of community service removing litter from Franklin County rivers and roadways. The defendants were also sentenced to one year in jail; the jail time was suspended on the condition that they successfully complete five years of probation.

Local residents called Ohio EPA's 24-Hour Emergency Spill Hotline (1-800-282-9378) about the illegal dumping on Oct. 23, 2008. Investigators responded to the affected area located on Walhalla Road between Indianola Avenue and North High Street.

Ohio EPA found 56 five-gallon buckets, containing mostly paint materials, which investigators determined had exploded in the ravine after being thrown from a moving vehicle for at least a mile along the creek. Ohio EPA oversaw the cleanup, which involved removing the buckets, flushing the creek with clean water and vacuuming the paint-contaminated water into tanker trucks for proper disposal. The ravine and creek were cleaned up before the area experienced any long-term

environmental damage.

Ohio EPA tracked the paint to the store where it had been purchased and to the companies that had purchased it. Numerous interviews with employees, property owners, tenants and family members led to the suspects. Ohio EPA headed up the investigation with assistance from the Ohio Attorney General's Office Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Franklin County Environmental Crimes Task Force, which consists of members from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Franklin County Prosecutor's Office, Franklin County Public Health, Columbus Division of Refuse, and SWACO.

SWACO Executive Director Ron Mills applauded the tireless efforts of investigators and the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office who pursued this case for nearly four years.

"We work year round in offering ways for residents to dispose of hazardous wastes with mobile collections and a permanent site which are free to residents," Mills said. "The task force will continue to pursue these types of cases with vigor."

"This case highlights the importance of Ohio EPA's spill hotline," said Ohio EPA Director Scott Nally. "The observant residents of Walhalla Ravine serve as a good reminder to all Ohioans to report suspected environmental crimes. Ohio EPA is here to help 24 hours a day."

SWACO and Ohio EPA officials have pictures of this illegal dumping that are available for media use. Please call SWACO at 614-871-5100 or Ohio EPA at 614-644-2160 if you would like to be emailed these pictures.

Anyone can report illegal dumping at www.nailadumper.com or by calling 614-871-5322 or Ohio EPA's 24-Hour Emergency Spill Hotline at 1-800-282-9378.

For more information on ways to properly dispose of household hazardous wastes go to www.swaco.org and www.epa.ohio.gov.